

A close-up photograph of an American flag draped over a stone wall. The flag's blue field with white stars is prominent, transitioning into the white and red stripes. The stone wall behind it is composed of large, light-colored, textured blocks.

***HAMLIN
GARLAND***

***A SON OF THE MIDDLE
BORDER***

Hamlin Garland

A Son of the Middle Border

EAN 8596547316022

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



TABLE OF CONTENTS

[A Son of the Middle Border](#)

[CHAPTER I](#)

[Home from the War](#)

[CHAPTER II](#)

[The McClintocks](#)

[CHAPTER III](#)

[The Home in the Coulee](#)

[CHAPTER IV](#)

[Father Sells the Farm](#)

[CHAPTER V](#)

[The Last Threshing in the Coulee](#)

[CHAPTER VI](#)

[David and His Violin](#)

[CHAPTER VII](#)

[Winnesheik "Woods and Prairie Lands"](#)

[CHAPTER VIII](#)

[We Move Again](#)

[CHAPTER IX](#)

[Our First Winter on the Prairie](#)

[CHAPTER X](#)

[The Homestead on the Knoll](#)

[CHAPTER XI](#)

[School Life](#)

[CHAPTER XII](#)

[Chores and Almanacs](#)

[CHAPTER XIII](#)

Boy Life on the Prairie

CHAPTER XIV

Wheat and the Harvest

CHAPTER XV

Harriet Goes Away

CHAPTER XVI

We Move to Town

CHAPTER XVII

A Taste of Village Life

CHAPTER XVIII

Back to the Farm

CHAPTER XIX

End of School Days

CHAPTER XX

The Land of the Dakotas

CHAPTER XXI

The Grasshopper and the Ant

CHAPTER XXII

We Discover New England

CHAPTER XXIII

Coasting Down Mt. Washington

CHAPTER XXIV

Tramping, New York, Washington, and Chicago

CHAPTER XXV

The Land of the Straddle-Bug

CHAPTER XXVI

On to Boston

CHAPTER XXVII

Enter a Friend

CHAPTER XXVIII

A Visit to the West

CHAPTER XXIX

I Join the Anti-Poverty Brigade

CHAPTER XXX

My Mother is Stricken

CHAPTER XXXI

Main Travelled Roads

CHAPTER XXXII

The Spirit of Revolt

CHAPTER XXXIII

The End of the Sunset Trail

CHAPTER XXXIV

We Go to California

CHAPTER XXXV

The Homestead in the Valley.



A SON OF THE MIDDLE BORDER

[Table of Contents](#)

CHAPTER I

Home from the War

[Table of Contents](#)

All of this universe known to me in the year 1864 was bounded by the wooded hills of a little Wisconsin coulee, and its center was the cottage in which my mother was living alone—my father was in the war. As I project myself back into that mystical age, half lights cover most of the valley. The road before our doorstone begins and ends in vague obscurity—and Granma Green's house at the fork of the trail stands on the very edge of the world in a sinister region peopled with bears and other menacing creatures. Beyond this point all is darkness and terror.

It is Sunday afternoon and my mother and her three children, Frank, Harriet and I (all in our best dresses) are visiting the Widow Green, our nearest neighbor, a plump, jolly woman whom we greatly love. The house swarms with stalwart men and buxom women and we are all sitting around the table heaped with the remains of a harvest feast. The women are "telling fortunes" by means of tea-grounds. Mrs. Green is the seeress. After shaking the cup with the grounds at the bottom, she turns it bottom side up in a saucer. Then whirling it three times to the right and three times to the left, she lifts it and silently studies the position of the leaves which cling to the sides of the cup, what time we all wait in breathless suspense for her first word.

"A soldier is coming to you!" she says to my mother. "See," and she points into the cup. We all crowd near, and I perceive a leaf with a stem sticking up from its body like a bayonet over a man's shoulder. "He is almost home," the widow goes on. Then with sudden dramatic turn she waves her hand toward the road, "Heavens and earth!" she cries. "There's Richard now!"

We all turn and look toward the road, and there, indeed, is a soldier with a musket on his back, wearily plodding his way up the low hill just north of the gate. He is too far away for mother to call, and besides I think she must have been a little uncertain, for he did not so much as turn his head toward the house. Trembling with excitement she hurries little Frank into his wagon and telling Hattie to bring me, sets off up the road as fast as she can draw the baby's cart. It all seems a dream to me and I move dumbly, almost stupidly like one in a mist....

We did not overtake the soldier, that is evident, for my next vision is that of a blue-coated figure leaning upon the fence, studying with intent gaze our empty cottage. I cannot, even now, precisely divine why he stood thus, sadly contemplating his silent home,—but so it was. His knapsack lay at his feet, his musket was propped against a post on whose top a cat was dreaming, unmindful of the warrior and his folded hands.

He did not hear us until we were close upon him, and even after he turned, my mother hesitated, so thin, so hollow-eyed, so changed was he. "Richard, is that you?" she quaveringly asked.

His worn face lighted up. His arms rose. "Yes, Belle! Here I am," he answered.

Nevertheless though he took my mother in his arms, I could not relate him to the father I had heard so much about. To me he was only a strange man with big eyes and care-worn face. I did not recognize in him anything I had ever known, but my sister, who was two years older than I, went to his bosom of her own motion. She knew him, whilst I submitted to his caresses rather for the reason that my mother urged me forward than because of any affection I felt for him. Frank, however, would not even permit a kiss. The gaunt and grizzled stranger terrified him.

"Come here, my little man," my father said.—"*My little man!*" Across the space of half-a-century I can still hear the sad reproach in his voice. "Won't you come and see your poor old father when he comes home from the war?"

"My little man!" How significant that phrase seems to me now! The war had in very truth come between this patriot and his sons. I had forgotten him—the baby had never known him.

Frank crept beneath the rail fence and stood there, well out of reach, like a cautious kitten warily surveying an alien dog. At last the soldier stooped and drawing from his knapsack a big red apple, held it toward the staring babe, confidently calling, "Now, I guess he'll come to his poor old pap home from the war."

The mother apologized. "He doesn't know you, Dick. How could he? He was only nine months old when you went away. He'll go to you by and by."

The babe crept slowly toward the shining lure. My father caught him despite his kicking, and hugged him close. "Now I've got you," he exulted.

Then we all went into the little front room and the soldier laid off his heavy army shoes. My mother brought a pillow to put under his head, and so at last he stretched out on the floor the better to rest his tired, aching bones, and there I joined him.

"Oh, Belle!" he said, in tones of utter content. "This is what I've dreamed about a million times."

Frank and I grew each moment more friendly and soon began to tumble over him while mother hastened to cook something for him to eat. He asked for "hot biscuits and honey and plenty of coffee."

That was a mystic hour—and yet how little I can recover of it! The afternoon glides into evening while the soldier talks, and at last we all go out to the barn to watch mother milk the cow. I hear him ask about the crops, the neighbors.—The sunlight passes. Mother leads the way back to the house. My father follows carrying little Frank in his arms.

He is a "strange man" no longer. Each moment his voice sinks deeper into my remembrance. He is my father—that I feel ringing through the dim halls of my consciousness. Harriet clings to his hand in perfect knowledge and confidence. We eat our bread and milk, the trundle-bed is pulled out, we children clamber in, and I go to sleep to the music of his resonant voice recounting the story of the battles he had seen, and the marches he had made.

The emergence of an individual consciousness from the void is, after all, the most amazing fact of human life and I

should like to spend much of this first chapter in groping about in the luminous shadow of my infant world because, deeply considered, childish impressions are the fundamentals upon which an author's fictional out-put is based; but to linger might weary my reader at the outset, although I count myself most fortunate in the fact that my boyhood was spent in the midst of a charming landscape and during a certain heroic era of western settlement.

The men and women of that far time loom large in my thinking for they possessed not only the spirit of adventurers but the courage of warriors. Aside from the natural distortion of a boy's imagination I am quite sure that the pioneers of 1860 still retained something broad and fine in their action, something a boy might honorably imitate.

The earliest dim scene in my memory is that of a soft warm evening. I am cradled in the lap of my sister Harriet who is sitting on the door-step beneath a low roof. It is mid-summer and at our feet lies a mat of dark-green grass from which a frog is croaking. The stars are out, and above the high hills to the east a mysterious glow is glorifying the sky. The cry of the small animal at last conveys to my sister's mind a notion of distress, and rising she peers closely along the path. Starting back with a cry of alarm, she calls and my mother hurries out. She, too, examines the ground, and at last points out to me a long striped snake with a poor, shrieking little tree-toad in its mouth. The horror of this scene fixes it in my mind. My mother beats the serpent with a stick. The mangled victim hastens away, and the curtain falls.

I must have been about four years old at this time, although there is nothing to determine the precise date. Our house, a small frame cabin, stood on the eastern slope of a long ridge and faced across a valley which seemed very wide to me then, and in the middle of it lay a marsh filled with monsters, from which the Water People sang night by night. Beyond was a wooded mountain.

This doorstone must have been a favorite evening seat for my sister, for I remember many other delicious gloamings. Bats whirl and squeak in the odorous dusk. Night hawks whiz and boom, and over the dark forest wall a prodigious moon miraculously rolls. Fire-flies dart through the grass, and in a lone tree just outside the fence, a whippoorwill sounds his plaintive note. Sweet, very sweet, and wonderful are all these!

The marsh across the lane was a sinister menacing place even by day for there (so my sister Harriet warned me) serpents swarmed, eager to bite runaway boys. "And if you step in the mud between the tufts of grass," she said, "you will surely sink out of sight."—At night this teeming bog became a place of dank and horrid mystery. Bears and wolves and wildcats were reported as ruling the dark woods just beyond—only the door yard and the road seemed safe for little men—and even there I wished my mother to be within immediate call.

My father who had bought his farm "on time," just before the war, could not enlist among the first volunteers, though he was deeply moved to do so, till his land was paid for—but at last in 1863 on the very day that he made the last

payment on the mortgage, he put his name down on the roll and went back to his wife, a soldier.

I have heard my mother say that this was one of the darkest moments of her life and if you think about it you will understand the reason why. My sister was only five years old, I was three and Frank was a babe in the cradle. Broken hearted at the thought of the long separation, and scared by visions of battle my mother begged the soldier not to go; but he was of the stern stuff which makes patriots—and besides his name was already on the roll, therefore he went away to join Grant's army at Vicksburg. "What sacrifice! What folly!" said his pacifist neighbors—"to leave your wife and children for an idea, a mere sentiment; to put your life in peril for a striped silken rag." But he went. For thirteen dollars a month he marched and fought while his plow rusted in the shed and his cattle called to him from their stalls.

My conscious memory holds nothing of my mother's agony of waiting, nothing of the dark days when the baby was ill and the doctor far away—but into my subconscious ear her voice sank, and the words *Grant, Lincoln, Sherman, "furlough," "mustered out,"* ring like bells, deep-toned and vibrant. I shared dimly in every emotional utterance of the neighbors who came to call and a large part of what I am is due to the impressions of these deeply passionate and poetic years.

Dim pictures come to me. I see my mother at the spinning wheel, I help her fill the candle molds. I hold in my hands the queer carding combs with their crinkly teeth, but

my first definite connected recollection is the scene of my father's return at the close of the war.

I was not quite five years old, and the events of that day are so commingled with later impressions,—experiences which came long after—that I cannot be quite sure which are true and which imagined, but the picture as a whole is very vivid and very complete.

Thus it happened that my first impressions of life were martial, and my training military, for my father brought back from his two years' campaigning under Sherman and Thomas the temper and the habit of a soldier.

He became naturally the dominant figure in my horizon, and his scheme of discipline impressed itself almost at once upon his children.

I suspect that we had fallen into rather free and easy habits under mother's government, for she was too jolly, too tender-hearted, to engender fear in us even when she threatened us with a switch or a shingle. We soon learned, however, that the soldier's promise of punishment was swift and precise in its fulfillment. We seldom presumed a second time on his forgetfulness or tolerance. We knew he loved us, for he often took us to his knees of an evening and told us stories of marches and battles, or chanted war-songs for us, but the moments of his tenderness were few and his fondling did not prevent him from almost instant use of the rod if he thought either of us needed it.

His own boyhood had been both hard and short. Born of farmer folk in Oxford County, Maine, his early life had been spent on the soil in and about Lock's Mills with small chance of schooling. Later, as a teamster, and finally as shipping

clerk for Amos Lawrence, he had enjoyed three mightily improving years in Boston. He loved to tell of his life there, and it is indicative of his character to say that he dwelt with special joy and pride on the actors and orators he had heard. He could describe some of the great scenes and repeat a few of the heroic lines of Shakespeare, and the roll of his deep voice as he declaimed, "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this son of York," thrilled us—filled us with desire of something far off and wonderful. But best of all we loved to hear him tell of "Logan at Peach Tree Creek," and "Kilpatrick on the Granny White Turnpike."

He was a vivid and concise story-teller and his words brought to us (sometimes all too clearly), the tragic happenings of the battlefields of Atlanta and Nashville. To him Grant, Lincoln, Sherman and Sheridan were among the noblest men of the world, and he would not tolerate any criticism of them.

Next to his stories of the war I think we loved best to have him picture "the pineries" of Wisconsin, for during his first years in the State he had been both lumberman and raftsmen, and his memory held delightful tales of wolves and bears and Indians.

He often imitated the howls and growls and actions of the wild animals with startling realism, and his river narratives were full of unforgettable phrases like "the Jinny Bull Falls," "Old Moosinee" and "running the rapids."

He also told us how his father and mother came west by way of the Erie Canal, and in a steamer on the Great Lakes, of how they landed in Milwaukee with Susan, their twelve-

year-old daughter, sick with the smallpox; of how a farmer from Monticello carried them in his big farm wagon over the long road to their future home in Green county and it was with deep emotion that he described the bitter reception they encountered in the village.

It appears that some of the citizens in a panic of dread were all for driving the Garlands out of town—then up rose old Hugh McClintock, big and gray as a grizzly bear, and put himself between the leader of the mob and its victims, and said, "You shall not lay hands upon them. Shame on ye!" And such was the power of his mighty arm and such the menace of his flashing eyes that no one went further with the plan of casting the new comers into the wilderness.

Old Hugh established them in a lonely cabin on the edge of the village, and thereafter took care of them, nursing grandfather with his own hands until he was well. "And that's the way the McClintocks and the Garlands first joined forces," my father often said in ending the tale. "But the name of the man who carried your Aunt Susan in his wagon from Milwaukee to Monticello I never knew."

I cannot understand why that sick girl did not die on that long journey over the rough roads of Wisconsin, and what it all must have seemed to my gentle New England grandmother I grieve to think about. Beautiful as the land undoubtedly was, such an experience should have shaken her faith in western men and western hospitality. But apparently it did not, for I never heard her allude to this experience with bitterness.

In addition to his military character, Dick Garland also carried with him the odor of the pine forest and exhibited

the skill and training of a forester, for in those early days even at the time when I began to remember the neighborhood talk, nearly every young man who could get away from the farm or the village went north, in November, into the pine woods which covered the entire upper part of the State, and my father, who had been a raftsman and timber cruiser and pilot ever since his coming west, was deeply skilled with axe and steering oars. The lumberman's life at that time was rough but not vicious, for the men were nearly all of native American stock, and my father was none the worse for his winters in camp.

His field of action as lumberman was for several years, in and around Big Bull Falls (as it was then called), near the present town of Wausau, and during that time he had charge of a crew of loggers in winter and in summer piloted rafts of lumber down to Dubuque and other points where saw mills were located. He was called at this time, "Yankee Dick, the Pilot."

As a result of all these experiences in the woods, he was almost as much woodsman as soldier in his talk, and the heroic life he had led made him very wonderful in my eyes. According to his account (and I have no reason to doubt it) he had been exceedingly expert in running a raft and could ride a canoe like a Chippewa. I remember hearing him very forcefully remark, "God forgot to make the man I could not follow."

He was deft with an axe, keen of perception, sure of hand and foot, and entirely capable of holding his own with any man of his weight. Amid much drinking he remained temperate, and strange to say never used tobacco in any

form. While not a large man he was nearly six feet in height, deep-chested and sinewy, and of dauntless courage. The quality which defended him from attack was the spirit which flamed from his eagle-gray eyes. Terrifying eyes they were, at times, as I had many occasions to note.

As he gathered us all around his knee at night before the fire, he loved to tell us of riding the whirlpools of Big Bull Falls, or of how he lived for weeks on a raft with the water up to his knees (sleeping at night in his wet working clothes), sustained by the blood of youth and the spirit of adventure. His endurance even after his return from the war, was marvellous, although he walked a little bent and with a peculiar measured swinging stride—the stride of Sherman's veterans.

As I was born in the first smoke of the great conflict, so all of my early memories of Green's coulee are permeated with the haze of the passing war-cloud. My soldier dad taught me the manual of arms, and for a year Harriet and I carried broom-sticks, flourished lath sabers, and hammered on dishpans in imitation of officers and drummers. Canteens made excellent water-bottles for the men in the harvest fields, and the long blue overcoats which the soldiers brought back with them from the south lent many a vivid spot of color to that far-off landscape.

All the children of our valley inhaled with every breath this mingled air of romance and sorrow, history and song, and through those epic days runs a deep-laid consciousness of maternal pain. My mother's side of those long months of waiting was never fully delineated, for she was natively reticent and shy of expression. But piece by piece in later

years I drew from her the tale of her long vigil, and obtained some hint of the bitter anguish of her suspense after each great battle.

It is very strange, but I cannot define her face as I peer back into those childish times, though I can feel her strong arms about me. She seemed large and quite middle-aged to me, although she was in fact a handsome girl of twenty-three. Only by reference to a rare daguerreotype of the time am I able to correct this childish impression.

Our farm lay well up in what is called Green's coulee, in a little valley just over the road which runs along the LaCrosse river in western Wisconsin. It contained one hundred and sixty acres of land which crumpled against the wooded hills on the east and lay well upon a ridge to the west. Only two families lived above us, and over the height to the north was the land of the red people, and small bands of their hunters used occasionally to come trailing down across our meadow on their way to and from LaCrosse, which was their immemorial trading point.

Sometimes they walked into our house, always without knocking—but then we understood their ways. No one knocks at the wigwam of a red neighbor, and we were not afraid of them, for they were friendly, and our mother often gave them bread and meat which they took (always without thanks) and ate with much relish while sitting beside our fire. All this seemed very curious to us, but as they were accustomed to share their food and lodging with one another so they accepted my mother's bounty in the same matter-of-fact fashion.

Once two old fellows, while sitting by the fire, watched Frank and me bringing in wood for the kitchen stove, and smiled and muttered between themselves thereat. At last one of them patted my brother on the head and called out admiringly, "Small pappoose, heap work—good!" and we were very proud of the old man's praise.



CHAPTER II

The McClintocks

[Table of Contents](#)

The members of my mother's family must have been often at our home during my father's military service in the south, but I have no mental pictures of them till after my father's homecoming in '65. Their names were familiar—were, indeed, like bits of old-fashioned song. "Richard" was a fine and tender word in my ear, but "David" and "Luke," "Deborah" and "Samantha," and especially "Hugh," suggested something alien as well as poetic.

They all lived somewhere beyond the hills which walled our coulee on the east, in a place called Salem, and I was eager to visit them, for in that direction my universe died away in a luminous mist of unexplored distance. I had some notion of its near-by loveliness for I had once viewed it from the top of the tall bluff which stood like a warder at the gate of our valley, and when one bright morning my father said, "Belle, get ready, and we'll drive over to Grandad's," we all became greatly excited.

In those days people did not "call," they went "visitin'." The women took their knitting and stayed all the afternoon and sometimes all night. No one owned a carriage. Each family journeyed in a heavy farm wagon with the father and mother riding high on the wooden spring seat while the children jounced up and down on the hay in the bottom of the box or clung desperately to the side-boards to keep from

being jolted out. In such wise we started on our trip to the McClintocks'.

The road ran to the south and east around the base of Sugar Loaf Bluff, thence across a lovely valley and over a high wooded ridge which was so steep that at times we rode above the tree tops. As father stopped the horses to let them rest, we children gazed about us with wondering eyes. Far behind us lay the LaCrosse valley through which a slender river ran, while before us towered wind-worn cliffs of stone. It was an exploring expedition for us.

The top of the divide gave a grand view of wooded hills to the northeast, but father did not wait for us to enjoy that. He started the team on the perilous downward road without regard to our wishes, and so we bumped and clattered to the bottom, all joy of the scenery swallowed up in fear of being thrown from the wagon.

The roar of a rapid, the gleam of a long curving stream, a sharp turn through a pair of bars, and we found ourselves approaching a low unpainted house which stood on a level bench overlooking a river and its meadows.

"There it is. That's Grandad's house," said mother, and peering over her shoulder I perceived a group of people standing about the open door, and heard their shouts of welcome.

My father laughed. "Looks as if the whole McClintock clan was on parade," he said.

It was Sunday and all my aunts and uncles were in holiday dress and a merry, hearty, handsome group they were. One of the men helped my mother out and another, a roguish young fellow with a pock-marked face, snatched me

from the wagon and carried me under his arm to the threshold where a short, gray-haired smiling woman was standing. "Mother, here's another grandson for you," he said as he put me at her feet.

She greeted me kindly and led me into the house, in which a huge old man with a shock of perfectly white hair was sitting with a Bible on his knee. He had a rugged face framed in a circle of gray beard and his glance was absent-minded and remote. "Father," said my grandmother, "Belle has come. Here is one of her boys."

Closing his book on his glasses to mark the place of his reading he turned to greet my mother who entered at this moment. His way of speech was as strange as his look and for a few moments I studied him with childish intentness. His face was rough-hewn as a rock but it was kindly, and though he soon turned from his guests and resumed his reading no one seemed to resent it.

Young as I was I vaguely understood his mood. He was glad to see us but he was absorbed in something else, something of more importance, at the moment, than the chatter of the family. My uncles who came in a few moments later drew my attention and the white-haired dreamer fades from this scene.

The room swarmed with McClintocks. There was William, a black-bearded, genial, quick-stepping giant who seized me by the collar with one hand and lifted me off the floor as if I were a puppy just to see how much I weighed; and David, a tall young man with handsome dark eyes and a droop at the outer corner of his eyelids which gave him in repose a look of melancholy distinction. He called me and I went to him

readily for I loved him at once. His voice pleased me and I could see that my mother loved him too.

From his knee I became acquainted with the girls of the family. Rachel, a demure and sweet-faced young woman, and Samantha, the beauty of the family, won my instant admiration, but Deb, as everybody called her, repelled me by her teasing ways. They were all gay as larks and their hearty clamor, so far removed from the quiet gravity of my grandmother Garland's house, pleased me. I had an immediate sense of being perfectly at home.

There was an especial reason why this meeting should have been, as it was, a joyous hour. It was, in fact, a family reunion after the war. The dark days of sixty-five were over. The Nation was at peace and its warriors mustered out. True, some of those who had gone "down South" had not returned. Luke and Walter and Hugh were sleeping in The Wilderness, but Frank and Richard were safely at home and father was once more the clarion-voiced and tireless young man he had been when he went away to fight. So they all rejoiced, with only a passing tender word for those whose bodies filled a soldier's nameless grave.

There were some boys of about my own age, William's sons, and as they at once led me away down into the grove, I can say little of what went on in the house after that. It must have been still in the warm September weather for we climbed the slender leafy trees and swayed and swung on their tip-tops like bobolinks. Perhaps I did not go so very high after all but I had the feeling of being very close to the sky.

The blast of a bugle called us to dinner and we all went scrambling up the bank and into the "front room" like a swarm of hungry shotes responding to the call of the feeder. Aunt Deb, however shooed us out into the kitchen. "You can't stay here," she said. "Mother'll feed you in the kitchen."

Grandmother was waiting for us and our places were ready, so what did it matter? We had chicken and mashed potato and nice hot biscuit and honey—just as good as the grown people had and could eat all we wanted without our mothers to bother us. I am quite certain about the honey for I found a bee in one of the cells of my piece of comb, and when I pushed my plate away in dismay grandmother laughed and said, "That is only a little baby bee. You see this is wild honey. William got it out of a tree and didn't have time to pick all the bees out of it."

At this point my memories of this day fuse and flow into another visit to the McClintock homestead which must have taken place the next year, for it is my final record of my grandmother. I do not recall a single word that she said, but she again waited on us in the kitchen, beaming upon us with love and understanding. I see her also smiling in the midst of the joyous tumult which her children and grandchildren always produced when they met. She seemed content to listen and to serve.

She was the mother of seven sons, each a splendid type of sturdy manhood, and six daughters almost equally gifted in physical beauty. Four of the sons stood over six feet in height and were of unusual strength. All of them—men and women alike—were musicians by inheritance, and I never

think of them without hearing the sound of singing or the voice of the violin. Each of them could play some instrument and some of them could play any instrument. David, as you shall learn, was the finest fiddler of them all. Grandad himself was able to play the violin but he no longer did so. "'Tis the Devil's instrument," he said, but I noticed that he always kept time to it.

Grandmother had very little learning. She could read and write of course, and she made frequent pathetic attempts to open her Bible or glance at a newspaper—all to little purpose, for her days were filled from dawn to dark with household duties.

I know little of her family history. Beyond the fact that she was born in Maryland and had been always on the border, I have little to record. She was in truth overshadowed by the picturesque figure of her husband who was of Scotch-Irish descent and a most singular and interesting character.

He was a mystic as well as a minstrel. He was an "Adventist"—that is to say a believer in the Second Coming of Christ, and a constant student of the Bible, especially of those parts which predicted the heavens rolling together as a scroll, and the destruction of the earth. Notwithstanding his lack of education and his rude exterior, he was a man of marked dignity and sobriety of manner. Indeed he was both grave and remote in his intercourse with his neighbors.

He was like Ezekiel, a dreamer of dreams. He loved the Old Testament, particularly those books which consisted of thunderous prophecies and passionate lamentations. The poetry of *Isaiah*, The visions of *The Apocalypse*, formed his

emotional outlet, his escape into the world of imaginative literature. The songs he loved best were those which described chariots of flaming clouds, the sound of the resurrection trump—or the fields of amaranth blooming "on the other side of Jordan."

As I close my eyes and peer back into my obscure childish world I can see him sitting in his straight-backed cane-bottomed chair, drumming on the rungs with his fingers, keeping time to some inaudible tune—or chanting with faintly-moving lips the wondrous words of *John* or *Daniel*. He must have been at this time about seventy years of age, but he seemed to me as old as a snow-covered mountain.

My belief is that Grandmother did not fully share her husband's faith in The Second Coming but upon her fell the larger share of the burden of entertainment when Grandad made "the travelling brother" welcome. His was an open house to all who came along the road, and the fervid chantings, the impassioned prayers of these meetings lent a singular air of unreality to the business of cooking or plowing in the fields.

I think he loved his wife and children, and yet I never heard him speak an affectionate word to them. He was kind, he was just, but he was not tender. With eyes turned inward, with a mind filled with visions of angel messengers with trumpets at their lips announcing "The Day of Wrath," how could he concern himself with the ordinary affairs of human life?

Too old to bind grain in the harvest field, he was occasionally intrusted with the task of driving the reaper or

the mower—and generally forgot to oil the bearings. His absent-mindedness was a source of laughter among his sons and sons-in-law. I've heard Frank say: "Dad would stop in the midst of a swath to announce the end of the world." He seldom remembered to put on a hat even in the blazing sun of July and his daughters had to keep an eye on him to be sure he had his vest on right-side out.

Grandmother was cheerful in the midst of her toil and discomfort, for what other mother had such a family of noble boys and handsome girls? They all loved her, that she knew, and she was perfectly willing to sacrifice her comfort to promote theirs. Occasionally Samantha or Rachel remonstrated with her for working so hard, but she only put their protests aside and sent them back to their callers, for when the McClintock girls were at home, the horses of their suitors tied before the gate would have mounted a small troop of cavalry.

It was well that this pioneer wife was rich in children, for she had little else. I do not suppose she ever knew what it was to have a comfortable well-aired bedroom, even in childbirth. She was practical and a good manager, and she needed to be, for her husband was as weirdly unworldly as a farmer could be. He was indeed a sad husbandman. Only the splendid abundance of the soil and the manual skill of his sons, united to the good management of his wife, kept his family fed and clothed. "What is the use of laying up a store of goods against the early destruction of the world?" he argued.

He was bitterly opposed to secret societies, for some reason which I never fully understood, and the only fury I

ever knew him to express was directed against these "dens of iniquity."

Nearly all his neighbors, like those in our coulee, were native American as their names indicated. The Dudleys, Elwells, and Griswolds came from Connecticut, the McIlldowneys and McKinleys from New York and Ohio, the Baileys and Garlands from Maine. Buoyant, vital, confident, these sons of the border bent to the work of breaking sod and building fence quite in the spirit of sportsmen.

They were always racing in those days, rejoicing in their abounding vigor. With them reaping was a game, husking corn a test of endurance and skill, threshing a "bee." It was a Dudley against a McClintock, a Gilfillan against a Garland, and my father's laughing descriptions of the barn-raising, harvestings and railsplittings of the valley filled my mind with vivid pictures of manly deeds. Every phase of farm work was carried on by hand. Strength and skill counted high and I had good reason for my idolatry of David and William. With the hearts of woodsmen and fists of sailors they were precisely the type to appeal to the imagination of a boy. Hunters, athletes, skilled horsemen—everything they did was to me heroic.

Frank, smallest of all these sons of Hugh, was not what an observer would call puny. He weighed nearly one hundred and eighty pounds and never met his match except in his brothers. William could outlift him, David could out-run him and outleap him, but he was more agile than either—was indeed a skilled acrobat.

His muscles were prodigious. The calves of his legs would not go into his top boots, and I have heard my father say

that once when the "tumbling" in the little country "show" seemed not to his liking, Frank sprang over the ropes into the arena and went around the ring in a series of professional flip-flaps, to the unrestrained delight of the spectators. I did not witness this performance, I am sorry to say, but I have seen him do somersaults and turn cart-wheels in the door-yard just from the pure joy of living. He could have been a professional acrobat—and he came near to being a professional ball-player.

He was always smiling, but his temper was fickle. Anybody could get a fight out of Frank McClintock at any time, simply by expressing a desire for it. To call him a liar was equivalent to contracting a doctor's bill. He loved hunting, as did all his brothers, but was too excitable to be a highly successful shot—whereas William and David were veritable Leather-stockings in their mastery of the heavy, old-fashioned rifle. David was especially dreaded at the turkey shoots of the county.

William was over six feet in height, weighed two hundred and forty pounds, and stood "straight as an Injun." He was one of the most formidable men of the valley—even at fifty as I first recollect him, he walked with a quick lift of his foot like that of a young Chippewa. To me he was a huge gentle black bear, but I firmly believed he could whip any man in the world—even Uncle David—if he wanted to. I never expected to see him fight, for I could not imagine anybody foolish enough to invite his wrath.

Such a man did develop, but not until William was over sixty, gray-haired and ill, and even then it took two strong men to engage him fully, and when it was all over (the